Legal aid to poor persons belonging to SC/ST

*156. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH KALYAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) what is the nature of legal aid provided to poor persons belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities under the Legal Aid Programme;

(b) whether special attention is given to criminal cases, cases relating to immovable properties and labour disputes under the above programme;

(c) whether monetary assistance is also given to the above communities when they are faced with these cases; and

(d) the details of the budget allocations made for the purpose during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) and (b) Ordinarily, Legal Aid is provided to every person whose annual income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 6,000/- upto High Court level and Rs. 12,000/- in regard to cases in the Supreme Court. However, this limitation as to income is not applicable to persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are entitled to free legal aid right from the Munsiff's Court to the Supreme Court in all types of cases, civil, criminal as well as labour disputes. Free Legal Service includes expenses in regard to Advocates fees; court fees; drafting charges; preparation of paperbooks, affidavits; typing expenses and the like including summoning of witnesses etc.

(c) Since all expenses connected with litigation is paid out of legal aid funds, the question of granting any other monetary assistance does not arise.

(d) The Central Government provided the following budget for implementation of Legal Aid Programme during the last three financial years :—

1989-90 : 64.07 lakhs
1990-91 : Rs. 68.00 lakhs
1991-92 : Rs. 59.90 lakhs

Introduction of Computer System at Passport Office, Jalandhar

*157. SHRI BALBIR SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce Computer-system in the Jalandhar Passport office taking into consideration the heavy rush of applications;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, what other steps would be taken for expediting the early disposal of Passport applications ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) and (b) A phased programme of computerisation of all Passport Offices in India has been started and efforts are being made to complete this in the shortest time possible.

(c) Apart from computerisation, the Government has initiated a number of measures to reduce delays in the issue of passports. The measures inter-alia include an increase in the supply of passport booklets, creation of additional posts to augment the staff strength in the Passport Offices and streamlining of procedures for the issue of passports.

Pecuniary Jurisdiction of District Courts in Delhi

158. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to increase the pecuniary jurisdiction of District Courts in Delhi from Rs. 1 lakh to 5 lakhs,

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Delhi High Court Lawyers and the New Delhi Bar Association are agitating for the Division of subordinate Civil Courts into 5 districts; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?